

Remarks:

This amendment is submitted in an earnest effort to advance this case to issue without delay.

The specification has been amended to eliminate some minor obvious errors. No new matter whatsoever has been added.

Claim 1 has been amended by the insertion into it of the subject matter of now canceled claims 3 and 5.

Thus claim 1 describes how a non-aluminum oxide layer is formed on the surface of an aluminum alloy by depositing a non-aluminum metal on the surface in the presence of oxygen so that is metal oxides and forms the desired non-aluminum oxide layer.

This is in sharp distinction from US 6,599,636 of Alger where an oxide layer is deposited on the aluminum alloy. Thus according to the invention the aluminum alloy is coated with Ni, Fe, Cr, or Ti and then exposed to oxygen so that this metallic layer oxidizes. This prevents the formation of unwanted Al_2O_3 on the surface of the aluminum alloy, instead forming a protective layer of NiO_x , FeO_x , CrO_x , or TiO_x on the surface of the aluminum alloy. This is not what is done in Alger. Instead according to the invention slow-growing $\alpha\text{-Al}_2\text{O}_3$ is formed, not metastable simple

Al₂O₃, as described in the original application papers on page 5, lines 14-26.

Thus the claims clearly distinguish over the cited art under §102 and §103. Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

If only minor problems that could be corrected by means of a telephone conference stand in the way of allowance of this case, the examiner is invited to call the undersigned to make the necessary corrections.

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